

Biology Education Seminar, Fall 2019

BOT4935/ZOO4926 – 2 credits

Dr. Christine Davis

Mondays period 9, 4:05-4:55

Carr 222

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Office: Carr 620

Office hours: immediately
before class or by

Course description:

The Biology Education Seminar is designed to help Learning Assistants in BSC2011 integrate learning theory and effective practices for engaging students. In this course, LAs will read articles from the education literature, engage in discussions about their experiences with students and how this relates to the literature, complete weekly online teaching reflections, conduct interview or observation - based investigations into students' current ways of thinking about a topic, and solicit and analyze mid-semester evaluations of their teaching.

Purpose of the course:

- To support and prepare LAs to interact with students, question students according to class topic, make claims about students' ideas, and take action as a result. Ideally, to help students interact with one another.
- To inspire and motivate LAs to recognize and exercise their capabilities and responsibilities for making the world a better place.
- To provide a community for new LAs to discuss their roles and experiences working with students and faculty.

In this course, LAs will:

- Reflect on their teaching and learning.
- Reflect on and develop their views on teaching and learning.
- Make connections to relevant education theory and literature and share this with the instructor.
- Try out a variety of strategies in their learning teams and revise these strategies according to their experience.
- Listen to their students, make claims about their students' ideas, and take action to address those claims.
- Develop awareness of the intellectual, social, cultural diversity of students and begin thinking about differentiate instruction.
- Begin thinking about the ways in which they would like to see change, and begin to see themselves as influencing this process.
- Discuss their roles and experiences working with students and faculty.

Required texts

There is no textbook for this course. Required readings will be posted to the Canvas site.

Components of grade:

Participation – 25%

Weekly reflections – 25%

Student evaluations and observations assignment – 10%

Projects and presentations – 40%

Grading scale

90 – 100% = A;

80 – 89.9% = B;

70 – 79.9% C;

60 – 69.9% D;

below 60 = E

Description of the grade components:

Participation

All class members are expected to contribute to class discussions and activities. The purpose of these discussions is to help us as individuals, and as a group, develop meaningful interpretations of the ideas conveyed by the readings and to make connections to the Learning Assistant experience. Please come prepared each week with (1) a provocative question, (2) something interesting you found in the article, and (3) something you are confused about. You are expected to attend every class session and participate in the discussions and activities each week.

Weekly reflections

Each Sunday (see schedule at the end of the syllabus) by midnight you will submit a reflection by responding to prompts posted to the Canvas site. Each reflection will draw from the weekly activity led in BSC2011 as well as your readings in this class.

Student evaluations and observations

You will solicit feedback from your students on your teaching in BSC2011 and analyze the results to share with the class. The specifics of this assignment will be posted to the Canvas site on the day it is assigned. You will present the results of your data analysis in class (see schedule at the end of the syllabus).

Projects and presentations

This year, we'll collaborate evaluate the LA programs in BSC2010 and BSC2011. We'll discuss the details of this group project as the semester progresses.

UF counseling services

Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals. The resources include:

UF Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Rd, 392-1575, psychological and psychiatric services.

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career and job search services.

Many students experience test anxiety and other stress – related problems. “A Self Help Guide for Students” is available through the Counseling Center (301 Peabody Hall; 392-1575) and at their web site: <http://www.counsel.ufl.edu/>.

Academic Honesty Policy

All students registered at the University of Florida have agreed to comply with the following statement:

“I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.”

In addition, on all work submitted for credit the following pledge is either required or implied:

“On my honor I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

If you witness any instances of academic dishonesty in this class, please notify the instructor or contact the Student Honor Court (392-1631) or Cheating Hotline (392-6999). For additional information on Academic Honesty, please refer to the University of Florida Academic Honesty Guidelines at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx#honesty>.

Important – Plagiarism

Plagiarism is also a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy. Please review how to define plagiarism and how to avoid it:

<http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/msl/07b/studentplagiarism.html>

Accommodations for students with disabilities

Students who will require a classroom accommodation for a disability must contact the Dean of Students Office of Disability Resources, in Peabody 202 (phone: 352-392-1261). Please see the University of Florida Disability Resources website for more information at: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>. Note that the student should provide documentation of a requirement for accommodation by the second week of classes. No accommodations are available to students who lack this documentation. It is the policy of the University of Florida that the student, not the instructor, is responsible for arranging accommodations when needed. Once notification is complete, the Dean of Students Office of Disability Resources will work with the instructor to accommodate the student.

Course evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Course schedule and assignment due dates - coming soon!